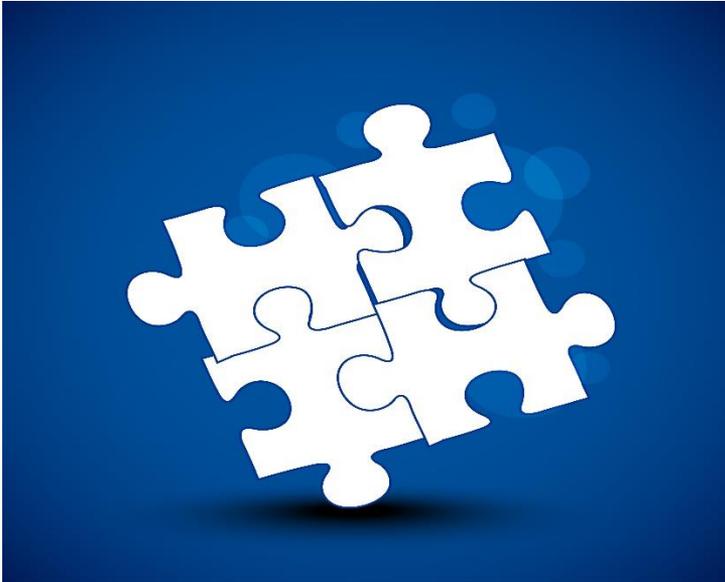


SERAC

SouthEastern Regional Action Council



Annual Report 2016



WORKING TOGETHER FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE

Chairman's Remarks

SERAC has caring, compassionate and professional staff. Under the leadership of the Executive Director Michele Devine our staff have become a cohesive team that fosters community collaboration, adheres to best practices and thrives on good old fashioned hard work. It is truly remarkable that Community Educator Angela Rae Duhaime, Epidemiologist Christine Miskell and Program Coordinator Rayallen Bergman are able to do so much with so little. The Board of Directors at SERAC are dedicated, diverse and professional. Outgoing Board Chair and Vice Chair Pam Luketich and Carley Higginbotham provided exceptional leadership and stewardship. Barbara Lockhart continues to serve as a Board Member after serving for more than a decade as a past member of the Executive Team / Secretary to the Board. John Duca, Lisa Buckley and Stacey Lawton have recently been elected respectively as Board Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and have assisted me in forming our new executive team. Members of our Regional Action Council provide a wealth of knowledge, community insight and support while serving as volunteers.

I'm pleased with how we are meeting our responsibilities, but I'm far from satisfied. I challenge our staff to continue to think "outside the box" in order to do even more with less during these challenging economic times. My commitment to you is simple. The SERAC Board of Directors will continue to support our staff in their efforts to provide pro-active professional services to the 20 communities we proudly call home. Thank you for placing your confidence and trust in SERAC.

Congratulations on another successful year!

Sincerely,

[Ed Chmielewski](#)

Edward J. Chmielewski Jr. M.A.
Chairman of the Board

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About SERAC

Who We Are

Southeastern Regional Action Council is a regional, community based, non-profit agency working to raise awareness, provide education, prevention and advocacy to youth, families and the entire community in order to reduce the impact of addiction and related risky behaviors.

Our Core Functions

- Assess the impact of addiction and other risky behaviors
- Identify gaps in services
- Support prevention, intervention and treatment efforts

Our Areas of Focus

Mental Health Promotion
Substance Abuse Prevention
Problem Gambling Awareness
Suicide Prevention

Our Communities

As a Regional Action Council we serve 20 towns in the southeastern region of Connecticut. These towns include: Bozrah, Colchester, East Lyme, Franklin, Groton, Griswold, Ledyard, Lisbon, Lyme, Montville, New London, North Stonington, Norwich, Old Lyme, Preston, Salem, Sprague, Stonington, Waterford, and Voluntown. Our efforts in gambling awareness, tobacco education, and suicide prevention extend to the entire eastern region of the state. We also continue to contract with communities across the state to provide needed services and support.

Needs Assessments & Surveys

Data Collection

In September and November 2015, SERAC conducted a community wide survey of adults. The objective of this community adult survey was to determine perceptions and attitudes about substance use in general and youth populations. Responses were received from adults from 19 of the 20 communities in the region. Between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016 ten youth surveys were conducted by SERAC. This included youth surveys on attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors regarding substance use as well as school climate. We would like to recognize the following towns and their commitment to data collection this past year: Griswold, Lyme/Old Lyme, Waterford, North Stonington, Ansonia, Derby, Oxford, Seymour, Shelton, and Milford.

Regional Youth Report 2014-2015

In early 2016, SERAC compiled a new regional youth report for southeastern CT. The following data points are highlights from the 2014-2015 report. The survey was administered anonymously to youth enrolled in grades 7-12 in 10 communities in Southeastern Connecticut in 2014 and 2015. The reported rates are based on responses from more than 7,400 youth.

- Alcohol is the most commonly used substance among youth in the region.
 - 30% of youth report ever having used alcohol in their lifetime.
 - 10% of youth report having used alcohol in the past 30 days.

- Marijuana is the most commonly abused illicit drug among youth in the region.
 - 19% of youth report ever having used marijuana in their lifetime.
 - 9% of youth report having used marijuana in the past 30 days.
 - The most common source of marijuana is friends.
- Overall, 13% of youth in the region report ever having misused a prescription medication without a prescription.
 - The most commonly abused type of prescription medication is pain medication.
 - 8% of youth report ever having misused prescription pain medications without a prescription.
- Overall, about 18% of youth report ever having gambled while 1% of youth report that they gamble on a daily basis.
 - 10% of youth report that someone in their family has gambled so much that it created problems at home, at work or with friends.
 - Among youth who report ever having gambled in their lifetime:
 - About 23% report ever having tried to cut back on their gambling.

The full survey report can be downloaded from our website at www.sectrac.org.

Community Report

In early 2015, SERAC conducted a survey of approximately from a 1350 individuals representing 19 of the 20 communities in the SERAC region. The survey collected data on perceptions on substance abuse in southeastern CT. Some of the highlights from the survey are included below.

More than 90% of all parents reported that it is **definitely true** that their family has clear rules discouraging their oldest child from smoking cigarettes/using tobacco, using electronic cigarettes, drinking alcoholic beverages, using marijuana or using prescription drugs without a prescription (Table 9). About 75% of all parents reported that it is **definitely true** that their family has clear rules discouraging their oldest child from gambling. The largest percentage of parents (71%) perceived that youth get alcohol from their parents without permission.

Parents were asked about their perception about the risk of harm if youth engage in certain behaviors. Between 65 and 67% of parents felt is great risk if their oldest child smokes cigarettes, drinks 5 or more alcoholic drinks 1 to 2 times per week, has 1 or 2 alcoholic drinks nearly every day or uses marijuana 1 to 2 times per week. Slightly more parents (70%) felt there is great risk if their oldest child misuses prescription drugs without a prescription.

Parents were also asked about the behaviors of the adults in their household. About 10% of parents reported that an adult in their household smokes cigarettes. About 79% of parents reported that an adult in their household uses alcohol. In addition, 28% of parents reported that an adult in their household gambles.

The full survey report can be downloaded from our website at www.sectrac.org.

Youth Programs

Adolescent Learning and Leadership Institute

2015-2016 represents the fifth year that SERAC has hosted ALLI, a regional leadership program. The goal of ALLI is to bring together students from across the Southeastern Connecticut to learn about current health issues and to develop leadership skills. Participants

learn about the importance of prevention activities aimed at reducing substance abuse and other risky behaviors.

This year's program included a total of 59 students from the following schools: Ledyard High School, Montville High School, Norwich Free Academy, Sachem School, Stonington High School, Waterford High School and Wheeler High School. There were eight meetings held during the 2015-2016 school year. Several meetings were hosted by participating high schools. A couple of the meetings were held at the Waterford Town Hall. Thank you to all of our hosts for their hospitality.

At the October 2016 meeting held at Montville High School ALLI members were assigned to one of 4 topics 1) Positive Social Impacts of Gambling, 2) Negative Social Impacts of Gambling, 3) Positive Economic Impacts of Gambling and 4) Negative Social Impacts of Gambling. Groups researched their topics and presented their findings to local legislators and Connecticut. Problem Gambling Services staff who joined us that day. After their presentations, the ALLI youth had the opportunity to speak personally with the officials who had come to hear their arguments.

On April 29th 2016 the ALLI students presented workshops to 100 middle school students who attended SERAC's 9th Annual Youth Forum. The ALLI students researched, created and delivered interactive workshops on the following topics: Healthy Relationships, Leadership, Gambling Awareness and Substance Abuse Awareness.

The middle schoolers told us that they loved learning about these topics from high school students.

SERAC 9th Annual Youth Forum

Dream It! Believe It! Live It!

On April 29th, 2015 SERAC hosted the 9th Annual Youth Forum for middle school students across the region at Three Rivers Community

College. This year 100 students attended from 6th, 7th, and 8th grade from our communities.

This year SERAC coordinated the activities of the regional high school leadership program (ALLI) and the annual youth forum for a single event. Throughout the year ALLI participants worked on sessions to be delivered for the middle school students at the Youth Forum. These amazing high school students in southeastern CT successfully implemented workshops on problem gambling, substance abuse, social skills, and leadership for over approximately 100 middle school students.

We could not be more proud of the efforts and collaboration across the middle and high schools in our region!

Thank you to Three Rivers Community College for hosting this amazing Youth Forum!

Statewide Tobacco Education Program

This past year SERAC enhanced the Statewide Tobacco Education Program (STEP) to include a train the trainer session for high school students. This spring 8 high school students from Waterford High School became STEP Trainers and delivered the program to 3rd graders in their school district. During 2015-2016 approximately 80 elementary school students were trained in tobacco prevention education. This training and opportunity is available for all our communities in southeastern CT. Please contact us for more information.

Financial Literacy and Gambling Awareness

Approximately 600 youth participated in financial literacy and gambling awareness programs through SERAC this past year. Thank you to the following partners who continue to support gambling awareness in our region: Chelsea Groton Bank, Montville High School, New London High School, Waterford High School and Connecticut College.

This program was highlighted as a prevention program at the National Conference on Problem Gambling in New York.

Training

7th Annual Prevention Conference

October 23, 2015 marked the 7th Annual Prevention Conference hosted by SERAC. This conference, which is a full day event focused on prevention, continues to grow year after year. Youth workers, school personnel, counselors and prevention professionals gathered at the Three Rivers Community College to attend sessions on prevention across various topics. Workshops included gambling awareness, mindfulness, alternative coping strategies, group dynamics and process. Participants were welcomed with an opening session on media and its impact by Ed Chmielewski.

SERAC would like to thank the following partners for a successful 7th conference: Reliance House, Project Courage, CASFY, Roberta Lewis, Department of Children and Families, The Connection Inc., and the Windham School Based Health Center.

Workforce Development

This past fiscal year SERAC staff and members took part in several training opportunities to increase the prevention workforce. Staff became trainers in Psychological First Aid/Post Traumatic Stress Management (PFA/PTSM), Stacked Deck: Problem Gambling Prevention, Signs of Suicide, and Screening for Brief Intervention and Referral for Treatment.

PFA/PTSM is an evidence-informed modular approach for assisting people in the immediate aftermath of disaster and terrorism: to reduce initial distress, and to foster short- and long-term adaptive functioning.

Stacked Deck is a program to prevent problem gambling is the only curriculum proven effective in changing youth gambling behaviors. Stacked Deck teaches young people to approach life as smart risk-takers, weighing the pros and cons of their actions to determine the odds of achieving positive results.

The Signs of Suicide Prevention Program (SOS) is a universal, school-based depression awareness and suicide prevention program designed for middle-school (ages 11–13) or high-school (ages 13–17) students.

SBIRT is an approach to screening and early intervention for substance use disorders and people at risk for developing substance use disorders. SBIRT emphasizes combined effort of screening and treatment services as part of a cooperative system of early intervention.

This past year Rayallen Bergman had the honor of presenting a workshops at the NE Fathering Conference in Mystic, CT. Below is information on the workshops that were presented.

The Assets of Superheroes

Presenter by: Rayallen Bergman

Superheroes in our culture spark our wonder. We've identified 40 developmental assets that youth use to protect against risk taking behaviors. Superheroes represent each of these as the "Power 40". Let's learn how!

Community-Wide Training

During the 2014-2015 SERAC offered approximately 45 training opportunities in prevention for community members and youth. Approximately 800 members attended these trainings. The following trainings were provided:

- Question Persuade Refer
- Youth and Adult Mental Health First Aid

- Training for Intervention Procedures
- Youth Compliance Check Procedures
- Current Drug Trends and Mental Health Awareness
- Psychological First Aid/Post Traumatic Stress Management
- Opioid Overdose and Naloxone Administration
- Stacked Deck: Gambling Prevention
- Fantasy Sports: Gambling Prevention
- The Assets of Superheroes
- Financial Literacy and Gambling Prevention: Bank on Your Future
- Team Building and Stress Reduction
- Statewide Tobacco Education Prevention
- Screening For Brief Intervention and Referral for Treatment

Local Prevention Efforts

Trauma Response Team

In the fall of 2015 SERAC launched the start of a local Trauma Response Team. The Trauma Response Team helps people across Southeastern Connecticut recover from the overwhelming stress caused by traumatic events, including natural disasters, serious accidents, suicides, homicides and terrorism, by providing community outreach and support. We serve communities, schools, health and human service providers, organizations, government agencies, workplaces and individuals. The Trauma Response Team is specifically trained in Psychological First Aid and Post Traumatic Stress Management. The goal in coming to your site is to help you and your program recover from a highly stressful event.

Regional Gambling Team

The regional gambling team worked on several projects including events, training, and awareness for Problem Gambling Week in March 2016. Members continue to work on integrating gambling

awareness across the spectrum of services and prevention in southeastern CT. This past year the team has worked hard to increase efforts in tracking trends and current legislation. We are looking for new members to join our team! Please contact SERAC for more information.

Sustainability

SERAC was awarded the continuation funding for year 7 of Drug Free Communities grant this past October 1st, 2015. The grant provides a total of five years of prevention funding to support prevention work in the following 8 communities in southeastern CT: Bozrah, Preston, Griswold, Lisbon, Norwich, Montville, Sprague, and Voluntown.

SERAC also received grants in 2015-2016 to sustain the efforts of the Adolescent Learning and Leadership Institute (ALLI). SEARC would like the to thank the following funders for their awards to support the leadership development of youth in southeastern CT:

- The Community Foundation of Eastern CT
- Chelsea Groton Foundation
- Chamber of Commerce

This past year SERAC also received funding from the CVS Tobacco Free Kids Initiative in order to continue providing the Statewide Tobacco Prevention Education Program. The funding was used to support a training of high school students in the STEP Program in order to provide the training to elementary school aged peers.

In May 2016, SERAC received a grant award from Chelsea Groton to ensure the enforcement of the new laws related to electronic nicotine delivery systems. Through this initiative SERAC will coordinate efforts to check the compliance of local retailers to prohibit the sale of such devices to individuals under 18.

As of October 1, 2016 SERAC is also the award recipient of a federal grant to reduce underage drinking (STOP-ACT, Sober Truth On

Preventing Underage Drinking Act). This is a four year grant that will address at risk and vulnerable youth populations in southeastern CT through increasing the availability of evidence based early intervention programs. The funding will be used to increase the capacity of the entire region to provide early intervention strategies for underage drinking.

Legislative Initiatives

SERAC has spent substantial time advocating and providing community education on several legislative initiatives in 2015-2016 including the expansion of naloxone access, increased use of the prescription monitoring program, 7-day limitation on first time use of opioid prescription, and compliance regarding the licensure for the sale of nicotine delivery systems.

Awards & Recognition

Outstanding Community Leadership

This year SERAC would like to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of Stacey Lawton. Stacey Lawton is the Deputy Director of the Southeastern Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (SCADD). Stacey has been a board member since 2011. Her dedication to the youth and families in southeastern CT is evidenced by her action and commitment in supporting SERAC activities through the years. Stacey has a unique understanding of the struggles that families and parents are experiencing here in our region in regard to substance abuse, trauma, and suicide prevention. Just to name a few of her commitments and achievements as a board member of SERAC this year:

- Becoming trained in Psychological First Aid/PTSM
- Member of the SERAC Trauma Response Team
- Speaking engagements and panel guest
- Providing QPR training for over 75 staff members at SCAAD

Outstanding Coalition Involvement

SERAC would like to acknowledge the incredible coalition member involvement of the Ledyard Safe Teens Coalition. The council first started in 2007. The membership of the council reflects diverse and rich perspectives from youth, parents, school, law enforcement, and religious leaders. The mighty efforts of this small town prove that when we work together and make every effort to be inclusive, great things can happen in our community. Through the coalition, Ledyard was awarded a Drug Free Community grant in 2015. Some of the coalition efforts include: youth surveys, participation in ALLI, compliance checks, community education, and increasing juvenile diversion efforts.

SERAC Board Members

Ed Chmielewski- Chair
John Duca – Vice Chair
Stacey Lawton – Treasurer
Lisa Buckley – Secretary
Barbara Lockhart - Member
Michelle Sylvestre – Member
Ann Dagle – Member
Brenna Jaskiewicz- Member
Mark Juhola – Member
Kevin McBride- Member

SERAC Staff

Executive Director – Michele Devine
Community Educator – Angela Rae Duhaime
Epidemiologist – Christine Miskell
Program Coordinator – Rayallen Bergman

SERAC Communities

Bozrah
Colchester
East Lyme
Franklin
Griswold
Groton
Ledyard
Lisbon
Lyme
Montville

New London
North Stonington
Norwich
Old Lyme
Preston
Salem
Sprague
Stonington
Voluntown
Waterford

Contact Information:
228 W Town Street Norwich CT 06360
860-848-2800
www.sectrac.org